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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 13 titles deal with the following topics: (1) the development, implementation, and evaluation of a reading improvement program for business and industry; (2) how instruction in a college rapid reading course meets individual students' learning needs; (3) the effectiveness of two instructional techniques used in a college developmental reading program; (4) a community college basic skills class; (5) the impact of a developmental reading course on student retention and achievement in a two-year technical college; (6) the relationship between and among reading failure and selected personality variables with severity of criminality; (7) the reading habits, attitudes, interests, problems, and early reading-related experiences of elderly active and elderly inactive readers; (8) syntax and reading comprehension; (9) adult literacy; (10) the effects of preteaching vocabulary and access to a glossary on comprehension of text; (11) an evaluation paradigm for university reading and study skills program courses; (12) a classroom strategy for teaching reading in the content area of human heredity and development; and (13) the effects of two methods of survey on the accuracy of prereading schema when controlling for prior knowledge and ability. (FL)

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# Reading and Study Skills and Instruction: College and Adult:

Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in Dissertation Abstracts International, July through December 1984 (Vol. 45 Nos. 1 through 6).

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Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Blair, Susan Margaret
THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF A READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Cahn, Elissa Mae
EVALUATION OF HOW INSTRUCTION IN A COLLEGE RAPID READING COURSE MEETS INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS' LEARNING NEEDS

Droege, Ralph Edwin
A STUDY TO DETERMINE IF A METHOD EMPHASIZING GENERAL READING SKILLS OR A METHOD OF VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT IS MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING PROGRAM OF A SMALL JUNIOR COLLEGE

Garstka, Pauline Ann
INSIDE A COMMUNITY COLLEGE BASIC SKILLS CLASS: A CASE STUDY

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THE IMPACT OF A DEVELOPMENTAL READING COURSE ON STUDENT RETENTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS IN A TWO-YEAR TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Glad, Jodene Smith
A STUDY OF THE POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AND AMONG READING FAILURE AND SELECTED PERSONALITY VARIABLES WITH SEVERITY OF CRIMINALITY

Glenn, Liney J. Stone
A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE READING ATTITUDES, HABITS, INTERESTS, PROBLEMS, AND EARLY READING-RELATED EXPERIENCES OF ELDERLY ACTIVE READERS AND ELDERLY INACTIVE READERS

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SYNTAX AND READING COMPREHENSION: A SECTOR ANALYSIS OF SYNTACTIC CHANGES MADE BY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Kazemek, Francis E.
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THE EFFECTS OF PRETEACHING VOCABULARY AND ACCESS TO A GLOSSARY ON COMPREHENSION OF TEXT

Shea, Mary Ann
AN EVALUATION PARADIGM FOR UNIVERSITY READING AND STUDY SKILLS PROGRAM COURSES

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DISCOVERING A CLASSROOM STRATEGY FOR TEACHING READING IN THE CONTENT AREA OF HUMAN HEREDITY AND DEVELOPMENT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING LEVEL, ATTITUDE, AND APPLICATION-LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT

Williams, Joyce Faye
AN INVESTICATION OF THE EFFECTS OF TWO METHODS OF SURVEY ON THE ACCURACY OF PREREADING SCHEMA, WHEN CONTROLLING FOR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY

## THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF A READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Order No. DA8405850

BLAIR, SUSAN MARGARET, ED.D. *University of Pennsylvania*, 1983. 152pp. Chairman: Dr. Allan A. Glatthorn

The purpose of this study was to conduct a case study of educational problem solving. The specific problem was to determine an effective means of improving job-related reading skills of workers in business and industry, operating within the constraints of the standard company-sponsored training program. The literature provided few articles and few empirical studies dealing with reading programs for adult business readers in the workplace. The bulk of the literature dealt with reading programs conducted within an educational setting, usually with the purpose of learning how adult learners learn.

A preliminary reading program was developed by the researcher and was tested in a pilot with six participants in an electronics manufacturing company. The results of this pilot test led to the refinement of the program, including its various components, teaching strategies, materials, activities to be used for instruction, and measures for evaluation. This revised program was then tested in the field with 11 participants in an international communications corporation. Evaluative data were gathered through preliminary personal reading skill inventories, recorded observations by the researcher and participants, and post-instructional interviews and questionnaires.

The results of the study indicate that the field test was effective for the majority of the participants. The participants expressed enthusiasm for their improved skills. These results have implications for reading educators, for adult learners in general, and for adult learners in business in particular. The participants in this study wanted to have input into the program and wanted certain materials and activities included in the program which they perceived to be necessary for skill improvement. This finding was consistent with adult learning theory which states that adult learners understand their needs and interests and want to have an equal voice in a program of instruction. In addition, this researcher had to be flexible enough so that individual participant's desires could be considered and included in the program. The participants wanted a focus on job-related materials, and had definite expectations of the program regarding skill development for improved job performance. This information was gathered both before the first instructional session and during the progress of the program. . . . (Author's abstract exceeds stipulated maximum length. Discontinued here with permission of author.) UMI

## A STUDY TO DETERMINE IF A METHOD EMPHASIZING GENERAL READING SKILLS OR A METHOD OF VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT IS MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING PROGRAM OF A SMALL JUNIOR COLLEGE

Order No. DA8413145

DROEGE, RALPH EDWIN, ED.D. *The University of Alabama*, 1983. 157pp.

In a study investigating the effect of concentrated vocabulary emphasis in college developmental reading classes, a comparison was made between classes receiving vocabulary instruction and those receiving general reading instruction. The study attempted to determine the effect of vocabulary instruction on the variables of reading vocabulary and comprehension scores, IQ scores, self-concept scores, and vocabulary competency scores, and to determine differences in general reading improvement using vocabulary instruction between students who were reading at a higher level initially and those who were reading at an initially lower level.

The population for this study included entering students at Concordia College who were randomly assigned into developmental reading classes. The experimental group was composed of two sections of developmental reading with one class of 18 students and the other with 17. The control group included two classes of 15 and 18 students. Most of the students came from central Alabama and all were black.

Three null hypotheses tested for the study theorized: ($Ho_1$) No significant difference in the mean gain scores in each of the eight dependent variables will be found between those students who receive instruction emphasizing vocabulary development and those who do not receive vocabulary emphasis during instruction. ($Ho_2$) No significant difference will be found in the mean gain scores in each of the eight dependent variables between those students who are at a higher reading level initially and those students who are at a lower initial reading level. ($Ho_3$) No significant interaction will be found between treatment and initial reading levels of the students in the developmental reading course.

An analysis of the data using a two-way analysis of variance found there was no significant interaction between the treatment of the groups and reading levels, there were no significant differences in the mean gain scores of any of the dependent variables between groups, and there was not a significant difference between initial reading levels and mean gain scores. The results imply that either a method emphasizing vocabulary or a method using traditional methods may be used with equal success in a college reading course.

## EVALUATION OF HOW INSTRUCTION IN A COLLEGE RAPID READING COURSE MEETS INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS' LEARNING NEEDS

Order No. DA8418623

CAHN, ELISSA MAE, PH.D. *Saint Louis University*, 1984. 81pp.

This study was designed to ascertain whether students enrolled voluntarily in a four-year university rapid reading course could: (1) Assess reasons for taking the course, set their own goals, and consider curriculum content required to attain these goals; (2) Complete a Pre- and Post-Course Survey on motivation and needs assessment in the area of reading skills; (3) Complete a post-course evaluation of their success in reading their pre-course goals; (4) Transfer the newly learned reading skills to other college courses.

The results of the study, as indicated on the Pre- and Post-Surveys, showed that changes were made in motivation and reading rate and comprehension skills between entry and exit. There was a significant change in the area of motivation. All students chose increased reading rate as a pre-course goal and the majority met that goal. Improved reading comprehension was also set as a goal and was achieved by a large number of participants. The results from this study indicated that students were able to define their own goals and to accept the responsibility for completing them. An unanticipated outcome was increased concentration. It was ascertained that program evaluation can provide the institution and the instructor(s) with information necessary to plan and implement effectively a college reading program in which the student improves his reading skills.

## INSIDE A COMMUNITY COLLEGE BASIC SKILLS CLASS: A CASE STUDY

Order No. DA8414604

GARSTKA, PAULINE ANN, ED.D. *Pepperdine University*, 1984. 166pp. Chairperson: Michele Stimac

*Statement of the Problem*. This study had a threefold specific purpose: the collection of qualitative data about community college basic skills students and classroom environment; analysis of data to determine if they supported or negated leading researchers' identification of students' characteristics and behaviors; and formulation of hypotheses for further research.

*Procedure*. During fall, 1981, a case study was conducted of an evening English Reading and Writing Basic Skills class. Qualitative research methods were used to conduct the study and the process consisted of three stages. During the entry stage, arrangements, for and actual entry into the field occurred. During the data gathering stage, the following ethnographic research techniques were used to collect the data: participant observation, taking field notes, interviewing, and examining records. During the closing stage, the data were organized, coded, analyzed, and interpreted. Hypotheses were formulated.

*Findings*. The research indicated that basic skills students in this class had the following characteristics. Students worked full-time and enrolled in school part-time to improve their English and their employment skills. They possessed poor study skills and experienced little previous academic success. They responded to group learning activities that involved them in discussion. They did not place a high

priority on course completion and two-thirds of them dropped out for four basic reasons: class too hard, reasons related to job, illness and personal problems. This research supported the findings reported by other researchers.

The following hypotheses were formulated about basic skills students. (1) Students will be more successful in class and less prone to drop if they receive prior instruction in study skills and training in self-directed learning. (2) Students will be more successful in reaching their academic goals if they are in classrooms that immediately establish an accepting and supportive environment, that allow them to be involved in self-diagnosis of their learning needs, and that allow them to participate in planning their own learning activities. (3) Students will be more responsive to learning activities that involve them in group discussion and employ visual aids. (4) Students will place a higher priority on course completion if they are involved in making decisions about their own learning.

## THE IMPACT OF A DEVELOPMENTAL READING COURSE ON STUDENT RETENTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS IN A TWO-YEAR TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Order No. DA8408667

GARTH, CHARLOTTE STANSON, ED.D. *The University of Tennessee*, 1983. 229pp. Major Professor: John R. Ray

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a developmental reading course on student retention and achievement in a two-year technical community college. In this investigation, the Stanford Diagnostic and the Nelson-Denny Reading Tests were compared to determine the students' strengths and weaknesses in reading, and correlations were computed to examine the intragroup relationships within the tests.

A comparative-descriptive method was used to compare pretest and posttest mean scores for the evaluation of the students' performance after they completed the developmental reading course. Their grade point averages, total hours completed and retention according to race and sex were compared after three consecutive quarters with a similar group of students who did not take the course. Eighty-four full-time entering freshman students who were low in reading ability comprised the subjects for this study. These subjects were divided into two groups: a comparative group and an experimental group. This study was conducted at Chattanooga State Technical Community College in Chattanooga, Tennessee during the 1981-82 academic year.

*T*-test comparisons were used to compare the impact of the independent variables and to evaluate reading achievement. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were used to determine the intragroup relationships within the test measures.

Results reported showed no significant differences in student retention and achievement between the expeimental and the comparative groups after three consecutive quarters. The findings suggest that a developmental reading course is no more or no less effective in improving achievement or in reducing the rate of attrition among entering freshman students in a community college who are low in reading ability than are the regular college courses.

## A STUDY OF THE POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AND AMONG READING FAILURE AND SELECTED PERSONALITY VARIABLES WITH SEVERITY OF CRIMINALITY

Order No. DA8410510

GLAD, JODENE SMITH, ED.D. *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*, 1983. 108pp.

Discrete personality dimensions and reading level were compared to the length of sentence for 99 adjudicated adult male felons who were among the first to enter Indian Springs Correctional Center near Las Vegas, Nevada. Personality dimensions were measured by the California Test of Personality, 1953 Revision, Adult. To measure reading, the Adult Ability Learning Examination was used. A paired stepwise multiple R was used to consider any relationship between reading and each personality dimension, in turn, with length of sentence as a measure of criminality. The results of the statistical analysis of reading and selected personality variables failed to show a significant association with length of sentence as a measure of severity of criminality, supporting the null hypothesis. As documented, a number of correlation coefficients was shown to be significantly different from zero, as shown by their statistical significance. Although the indicators of correlation were significant, the association between reading level and personality factors with length of sentence was low. For example, the highest association was only 13% for the variable reading and the variable Social Skills, with the variable length of sentence. As reading and each personality variable, in turn, were compared with length of sentence, a consistent positive correlation was revealed. As the length of sentence increased, reading and each personality score increased. It is apparent, contrary to popular belief, that within the confines of this study reading failure and personality adjustment were not significantly associated with length of sentence as a measure of severity of criminality.

## A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE READING ATTITUDES, HABITS, INTERESTS, PROBLEMS, AND EARLY READING-RELATED EXPERIENCES OF ELDERLY ACTIVE READERS AND ELDERLY INACTIVE READERS

Order No. DA8421321

GLENN, LINEY J. STONE, ED.D. *University of Pittsburgh*, 1984. 127pp.

The purpose of this study was to compare and describe the differences between elderly active and inactive readers. Reading attitudes, habits, interests, problems, and early reading-related experiences were investigated. The study was specifically designed to determine the self-reported reasons given by elderly active and inactive readers that indicate why some elderly adults are active readers and others are not.

A total of 100 elderly adults participated in this study. Data utilized for this endeavor were gleamed from the Elderly Readers' Questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 25 items and was untimed. A chi square analysis was employed to determine statistically significant differences between the elderly active and inactive readers.

Findings suggested that there are significant differences between elderly active and inactive readers. For example, elderly active readers were exposed to more reading-related experiences than inactive readers as children. Elderly active readers possess a more positive attitude toward reading and, therefore, have better reading habits than the elderly inactive readers. On the other hand, the elderly inactive readers reported experiencing significantly more reading-related problems than the active readers. Similarities as well as disparities were noted between the self-reported purposes for reading and reading interests of the two groups.

In terms of futuristic implications, the findings suggested that a positive attitude toward reading should be encouraged in children and pre-arranged reading times should be encouraged to serve as a basis for continued positive reading habits. Finally, it was suggested that programs providing reading instruction in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension should be established at various senior citizen establishments to allow interested elderly adults the oportunity to improve their skills.

## SYNTAX AND READING COMPREHENSION: A SECTOR ANALYSIS OF SYNTACTIC CHANGES MADE BY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8403267

JOHNSON-COHEN, LOIS R., ED.D. *Columbia University Teachers College*, 1983. 157pp.

This study examined the relationship between syntax and reading comprehension difficulty of academic text. The *Davis Reading Test*, a standardized college reading test, was used as an example of academic text. Volunteer student rewriters from a special state-

funded program helped develop an experimental version of the *Davis Test* that was closer to students' own spontaneous writing. The special program students were part of an entering class of a four-year college in a large city; they came from low-income neighborhoods and entered college without regard to high school grades or reading scores.

Sector Analysis, a tagmemic linguistic system developed by Robert L. Allen of Teachers College, Columbia University, was used to examine both the original and student paraphrased versions of the *Davis Test*. Possible relationships between syntax of text and reading comprehension were analyzed in two phases: (1) an examination and count of the characteristic syntactic differences between the original and student versions and (2) a statistical test of the null hypothesis that the original and student versions would prove to be equally difficult.

Analysis of syntactic changes made by college rewriters revealed: (1) decrease in mean lengths of 14 T-Units out of 41; (2) general simplification of syntax in 25 out of 46 sentences; (3) shifting of syntactic units from beginnings to middles and ends of sentences in 9 out of 46; and (4) altering of interrogative and inverted sentences in 3 cases.

The students moved from more formal to less formal patterns as they rewrote, paralleling findings of Potter and Deakins and demonstrating that Sector Analysis grammar offers an effective way of examining surface structure of English sentences.

Results revealed that student rewriting of *Davis Test* sentences did not significantly affect students' reading comprehension, corroborating results of Askov, Lubaus, and Kamm; Pearson; and Szabo.

However, results of a Power Analysis suggest that a study like the present one would need to use at least 175 subjects for each test version (350 in total) to have an 80% change of detecting differences. This points to the advisability of duplicating the research using a larger N.

## TOWARD A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF ADULT LITERACY

Order No. DA8414017

KAZEMEK, FRANCIS E., PH.D. *Southern Illinois University at Carbondale*, 1983. 286pp. Major Professor: Pat Rigg

Adult literacy educators do not have a comprehensive underlying theoretical framework upon which to base their literacy programs, instruction, and materials development. Although a body of potentially useful research from a number of disciplines does exist, including findings from experimental, descriptive, and ethnographic studies, this data has not been synthesized into a theory of adult literacy which can inform both future research and adult literacy instruction. Therefore, the general purpose of the dissertation is to provide a framework which will identify the distinctive features of adult literacy.

The author explores the problem of adult illiteracy in the United States and provides an historical sketch of adult literacy education in the United States during the present century. Definitions of adult literacy based on grade level standards or upon notions of functional competency are examined and found inadequate. The author proposes a relative definition of adult literacy, maintaining that literacy is both a personal and social act which depends upon an individual's purposes for reading and writing within specific cultural and situational contexts; the individual's perception of self, literacy, and the situation; the demands and constraints of the specific context; and feedback from text and from other persons in the contextual setting.

The author explores a number of disciplines: he discusses epistemology from a Pragmatic perspective and focuses on the importance of metaphor in shaping the way people think; he discusses implications of Dewey's ethical theory and the work of such cognitive psychologists as Neisser, Vygotsky, and Piaget; and he considers the sociological aspects of adult literacy by focusing on Barker's ecological psychology, Mead's social philosophy, and Goffman's sociology. Reading and writing are examined as both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic processes.

The author maintains that adult literacy education must be accompanied by individual perspective transformation and by social transformation. He concludes with a set of questions which provide the theoretical framework of adult literacy, and calls for further exploration of those questions.

## THE EFFECTS OF PRETEACHING VOCABULARY AND ACCESS TO A GLOSSARY ON COMPREHENSION OF TEXT

Order No. DA8414594

RENNER, SIGRID M., ED.D. *University of Missouri - Saint Louis*, 1984. 158pp.

Vocabulary knowledge has traditionally been considered a factor in reading comprehension. The assumed relationship has been based on correlational studies, however; and attempts to improve comprehension through vocabulary instruction have generally been unsuccessful. The purpose of this study was to study the effects of vocabulary instruction prior to reading a passage and of access to a glossary during reading of a passage on subsequent comprehension of the passage.

Junior college freshman English Composition classes were randomly selected to receive or not to receive instruction. Five key words from a target passage were presented in an instructional sequence which focused on developing understanding of the concepts represented by the words and on putting these terms in a variety of contexts relevant to the text. Subjects were randomly chosen for access to a glossary during reading or no access to a glossary. A college-level text passage was read, and a 20-question multiple-choice comprehension test was completed.

An analysis of covariance and an analysis of variance indicated significantly higher comprehension scores for both high-ability readers and low-ability readers who had received vocabulary instruction prior to reading the passage. There were no significant effects of access to a glossary during reading of the passage.

## AN EVALUATION PARADIGM FOR UNIVERSITY READING AND STUDY SKILLS PROGRAM COURSES

Order No. DA8413903

SHEA, MARY ANN, PH.D. *Washington State University*, 1984. 100pp. Chairperson: Gerald H. Maring

The principal purpose of the study was to develop an evaluation paradigm for university reading and study skills program courses. Secondly, the study investigated the implementation of the evaluation for the Washington State University Reading and Study Skills course by assessing the long-term goals of improved grade point average and reduced attrition and short-term goals of students' skills acquisition, satisfaction, and utilization of the strategies introduced.

Five groups comprised of twenty subjects each were taken from the following populations for the investigation of the long-term goals: (a) Treatment Group 1, students having a combined stanine score of five or below on the reading comprehension and verbal portions of the Washington Pre-College Test; (b) Treatment Group 2, students who were deficient at mid-semester, i.e., below a 2.0 grade point average; (c) Treatment Group 3, students who volunteered to take the course; (d) Control Group 1, students having a combined score of five or below on the reading comprehension and verbal portions of the Washington Pre-College Test, who were recommended but elected not to take the course; and (e) Control Group 2, students who were deficient at mid-semester, i.e., below a 2.0 grade point average, who were recommended to the course but elected not to take it. Hypotheses and research questions were formulated to ascertain whether findings would favor the treatment groups.

For improved grade point average, an analysis of variance repeated measure design followed by Tukey comparisons revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) at the end of the first semester only. For decreased attrition, a chi square analysis revealed that students who completed the course stayed at the University longer (Chi Square = 9.25, $p \leq .05$).

Sixty participants randomly chosen from among the three populations of students were administered a telephone interview designed by the researcher to measure the short-term goals of the study. It revealed that in general the students found the course helpful.

It was concluded that academic adjustment could not be measured solely by improved grade point average and that an evaluation paradigm including both experimental and descriptive statistics provided a more inclusive assessment of reading and study skills course goals.

**DISCOVERING A CLASSROOM STRATEGY FOR TEACHING READING IN THE CONTENT AREA OF HUMAN HEREDITY AND DEVELOPMENT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING LEVEL, ATTITUDE, AND APPLICATION-LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT** Order No. DA8410164

TEMPLIN, JAY MARVIN, ED.D. *Temple University*, 1984. 183pp. Major Adviser: Dr. Donald Humphreys

Colleges and universities are experiencing a lack of science literacy among many members of their freshmen classes (Times Educational Supplement, 1980). Science literacy means reading and understanding science literature. This deficiency is particularly acute among nonmajors. A literature review reveals that little is being done to remedy this lack of scientific literacy (Lagowski, 1981).

With respect to the discovery of a specific methodology to promote science literacy, the purpose of this study was to compare the effects of two methods. Each was implemented in a college freshmen biology class for nonmajors, *Human Heredity and Development* taught at the University of Delaware.

One method compared, the PQRST (P = preview, Q = question, R = read, S = summarize, and T = test), has often been criticized by educators. Although criticized, until recently it was the best method experts could suggest to teach reading in a content area. It is a specific adaptation to science content areas of the classical reading teacher's approach (learn to read). Its critics claim it creates an unwanted dichotomy between reading and science, with little research evidence to support its success (Herber, 1978).

In part, the goal for this study was to seek a viable alternative to the PQRST that could better ally reading and science instruction. Such an alternative is meaningful, based on the idea that reading instruction can join science content with the reading and reasoning process by which that content is learned (read to learn). Taught in conjunction, science teachers can teach their students how to read required materials as needed. Although little empirical evidence exists for this approach, a potential liasion is offered by the functional teaching (FT) method offered by Harold Herber of Syracuse University. It is used in this study as the second treatment.

Prediagnosed reading levels showed both study groups in need of guidance in science reading strategy. Each group was assigned a strategy, PQRST or FT. Results of this comparison showed both treatments to be effective in producing achievement at the application level, as defined by Bloom, with no significant difference, however, between the two. The FT method did also positively change students' self-perceived attitude to achieve in the biology course, *Human Heredity and Development*, from an original low level to a significantly higher one. . . . (Author's abstract exceeds stipulated maximum length. Discontinued here with permission of author.) UMI

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF TWO METHODS OF SURVEY ON THE ACCURACY OF PREREADING SCHEMA, WHEN CONTROLLING FOR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY** Order No. DA8412956

WILLIAMS, JOYCE FAYE, ED.D. *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*, 1983. 263pp.

Students are encouraged to study throughout their academic career. Yet, many students do not seem to benefit from studying regardless of the time they spend. This problem has been addressed through the development of organized study skills programs and systematic study methods to make the study process more effective for all students. However, few practitioners or researchers have evaluated what factors affect the study process. Survey identified as the first phase of a systematic study process, has been recommended through a wealth of anecdotal evidence. In general, the rationale is that students can identify main ideas before analytical reading and increase comprehension. The efficacy and methods of survey, while theoretically plausible, have not been subjected to systematic investigation.

Two survey methods were investigated in this research. The first method, text oriented survey, requires the reader to focus on the text. Person oriented survey, the second method, encourages the reader to interact with the text by pulling from previously acquired knowledge as well as from the text. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of two methods of survey on the accuracy of prereading schemata, when controlling for prior knowledge and ability.

A total of 64 university students, 28 low ability and 36 high ability students, were randomly selected and trained in one of two survey methods. The 64 university students were also randomly assigned to either a high prior knowledge text or low prior knowledge text condition. Multianalysis of variance showed that survey does result in the activation and/or formulation of prereading schemata of from 23% to 55% accuracy. Students in the high prior knowledge condition produced more accurate prereading schema, regardless of ability or survey method. However, low ability students appear to produce less accurate prereading schema than high ability participants.

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